

WE'VE GOT TALES OF SUSPENSE AND HORROR!

THE

THING!

10¢ NO 2
C.D.C.



BOB
FORGONE

The image is a dense collage of vintage comic book covers, primarily from the Golden Age and Silver Age of comics. The covers are arranged in a grid-like fashion, overlapping slightly. Titles visible include "Superman", "Jetta", "Mystery Comics", "Fantastic Tales", "Cosmo Cat", "Startling Comics", "Strange Mysteries", "Daring Adventures", "Famous Funnies", "Hilarious Raucous", "Teen-Age Sweetheart", "Duck", "Eerie", "Exciting Comics", "Casper Cat", and "Barnyard Comics". Many covers feature iconic characters like Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, and various cartoon animals. A large, stylized purple speech bubble with a black outline is centered over the collage. Inside the bubble, the text "WEB COMIC UNIVERSE.COM" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a thick black drop shadow, making it stand out against the colorful background. The overall aesthetic is nostalgic and celebratory of classic comic book art.



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The

THE THING

RED DEATH

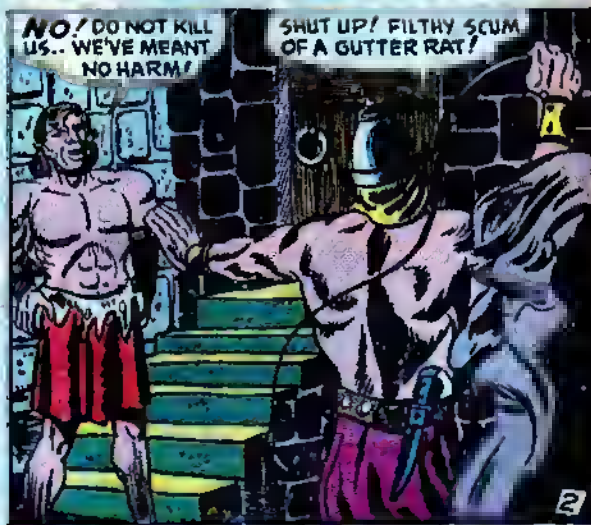
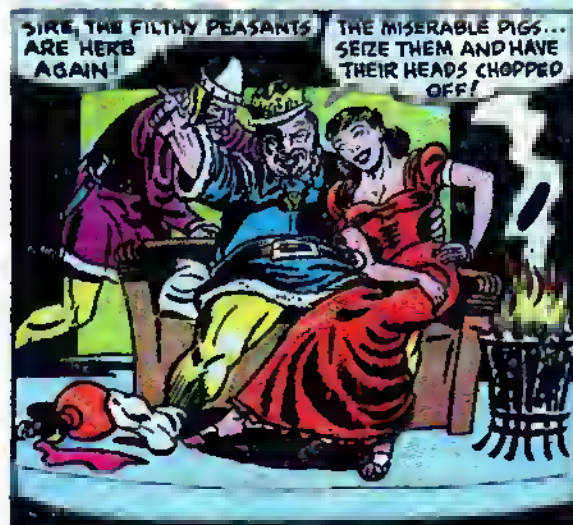
A N IDIOTIC KING, A STRANGE CLOCK, AND AN UNINVITED GUEST... THESE ARE THE INGREDIENTS TO A SUSPENSEFUL EPISODE IN THE HISTORY OF THE SMALL COUNTRY OF HIPPOTAMIA...



THE THING

THE RED DEATH HAD LONG DEVASTATED THE COUNTRY OF HYPOTAMIA. NOTHING HAD EVER BEEN SO FATAL AND HIDEOUS. THERE WAS BLEEDING FROM THE EYES AND MOUTH. THE ENTIRE SEIZURE LASTED ONE HALF HOUR... THEN THE VICTIM DIED. WHOLE TOWNS WERE RAVAGED BY THIS TERRIBLE PLAGUE!

THE VICTIMS DROPPED LIKE FLIES... THEIR BODIES COVERED WITH RED WELTS AND VERY RED BLOOD...



THE THING



WHEN THE KINGDOM BECAME DEPLETED OF HALF OF ITS POPULATION, THE KING THEN BEGAN TO WORRY...



THE THING



HO, HO, HO! THOSE POOR IDIOTS. THEY MUST TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES!

INSIDE THE WALLS OF THE CASTLE WAS THE KING... AND HIS COHORTS REVELED... WITHOUT FEAR OF THE RED DEATH...



TOWARD THE CLOSE OF ANOTHER WEEK OF SECLUSION THE LORDS AND LADIES STILL MADE MERRY... WHILE OUTSIDE THE CASTLE WALLS THE PLAGUE STILL RAGED.



THINGS ARE BEGINNING TO GET A LITTLE DULL, JESTER! PERHAPS A FOOL SUCH AS YOU COULD SUGGEST SOMETHING TO ENLIVEN MY GUESTS!

AHA! WHY NOT HAVE A MASKED BALL, SIRE?



TRUE... THAT WOULD BE MOST APPROPRIATE BUT HOW CAN WE SET THE TIME AND DAY... WE HAVEN'T A CLOCK OR CALENDAR IN THE ENTIRE CASTLE!

REST YOUR MIND OH, KING. YOU CAN SET THE TIME AND DATE... I WILL ASSURE YOU YOUR CALENDAR CLOCK WILL BE BACK IN ITS PLACE IN TWO HOURS!

THE JESTER WITH THE AID OF A TRUSTED SERVANT SNEAKED OUT OF THE CASTLE UNNOTICED AND FETCHED THE REPAIRED TIME-PIECE... BUT HAD TO STOP FOR A FEW MOMENTS TO REST THEIR WEARY BONES... THE CLOCK WAS BIG AND HEAVY...

LET'S GET ON WITH THIS CLOCK. THIS GRAVEYARD GIVES ME THE SHIVERS!

WE ARE JUST A FEW PAGES FROM THE CASTLE!



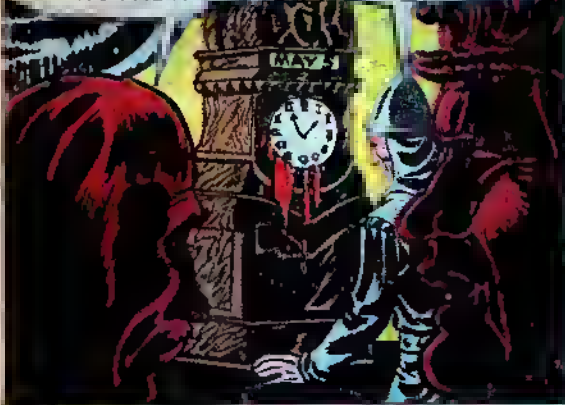
THE THING

SIRE, MAY I REMIND YOU THAT THIS CLOCK HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN ILL OMEN...LOOK! THERE IS BLOOD DRIPPING FROM ITS FACE!

FOOLS, THAT'S NOT BLOOD... IT'S RED WINE THROWN THERE BY OUR MERRYMAKERS!

COME! LET'S NOT CONCERN OURSELVES WITH THAT CLOCK...IT IS SERVING ITS PURPOSE AND TELLS US THAT THE GALA EVENT IS NEAR!

TRUE, SIRE! THE BALL IS TOMORROW NIGHT...AND THAT IS ENOUGH TO THINK ABOUT!

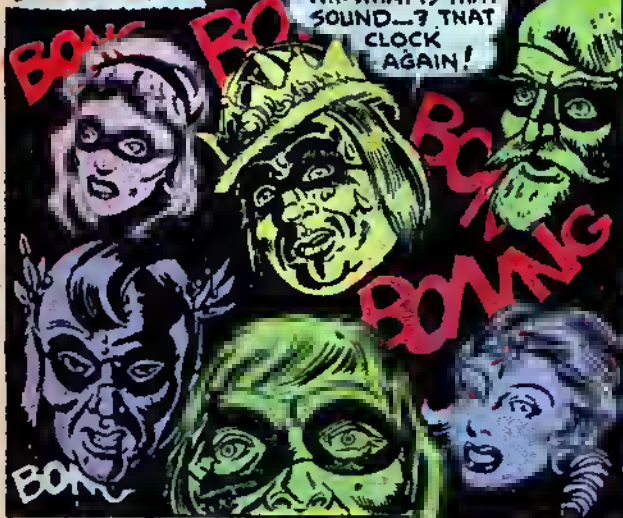


HOWEVER... THE NEXT NIGHT THE MASKED BALL WAS HELD... NO ONE THOUGHT OF THE STRANGE MARBLE CLOCK OR OF THE RED DEATH... BUT IT WAS COMING VERY CLOSE...



SUDDENLY!!!

WH. WHAT IS THAT SOUND...? THAT CLOCK AGAIN!



AGGH!!

WHAT'S COMING OUT OF THE CLOCK?



THE THING

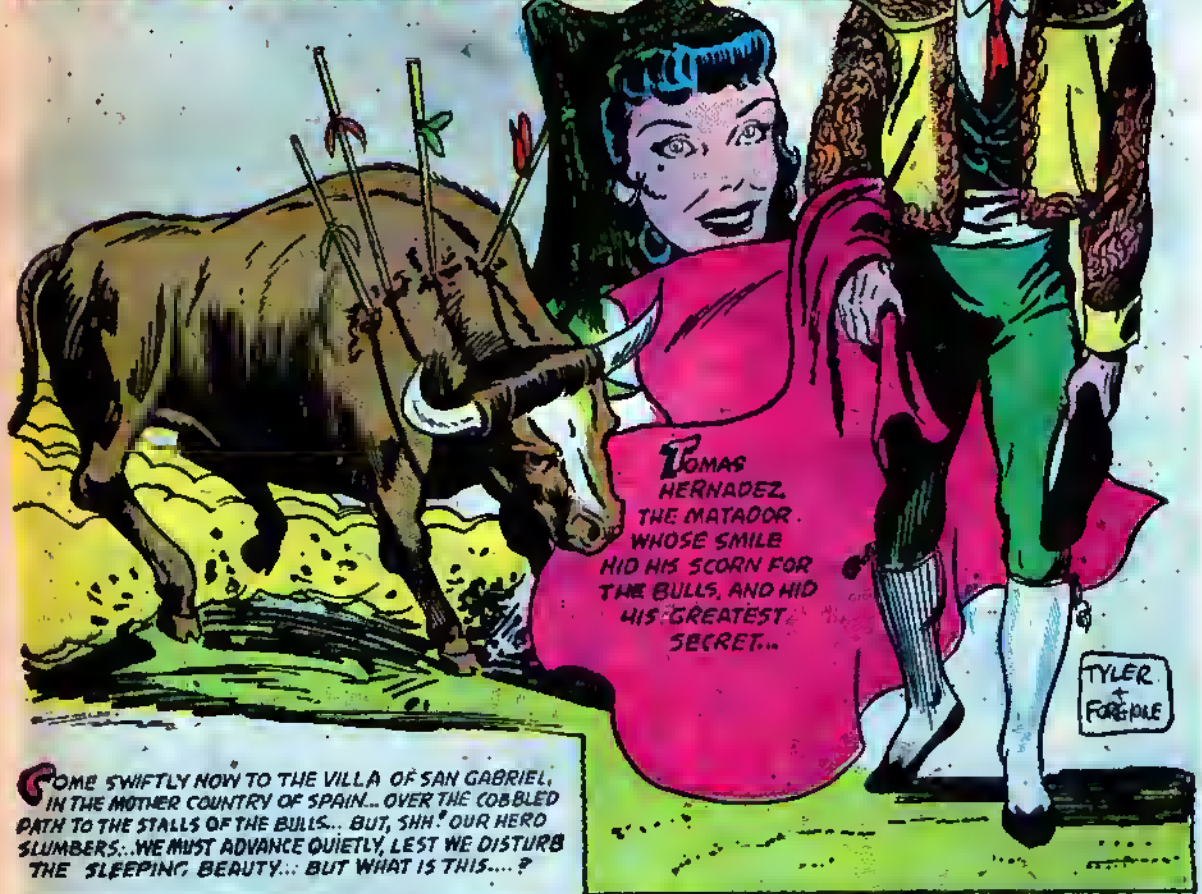


THE STRANGER DISAPPEARED AND THE LIFE OF THE MARBLE CLOCK WENT OUT WITH THE KING. DARKNESS, DECAY AND THE RED DEATH RULED HIPOTAMIA, FOREVER.



THE THING

EL TORO DIABLO



COME SWIFTLY NOW TO THE VILLA OF SAN GABRIEL, IN THE MOTHER COUNTRY OF SPAIN... OVER THE COBBLED PATH TO THE STALLS OF THE BULLS... BUT, SHH! OUR HERD SLUMBERS... WE MUST ADVANCE QUIETLY, LEST WE DISTURB THE SLEEPING BEAUTY... BUT WHAT IS THIS....?



THE THING

FOOL! DO YOU THINK I WANT IT SAID WE BREED MONSTROSITIES IN MY MANGER? HAVE YOU NO EYES, THAT YOU DO NOT SEE THIS **LITTLE PIG** IS GROWING HORNS?

HORNS? MADRE MIA... IT CANNOT BE!

NO... WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE... WHEN HE GROWS, THE HORNS OF A BULL ON HIS HEAD... UGH!

I'M GLAD YOU SEE, DIEGO... NOW AWAKEN THE BEAST AND SEE THAT HE NEVER SETS FOOT IN MY PLACE AGAIN! I WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH A DEMON!

WHA- WHAT IS THE MATTER? WHY DO YOU WAKE ME, DIEGO?

QUIET, LITTLE ONE... I DO NOT HAVE TIME TO EXPLAIN, BUT YOU MUST SLIP INTO YOUR GARMENT AND LEAVE. NEVER TO COME BACK AGAIN... EL MATADOR ORDERS IT THUS!

BUT WHY ARE YOU CRYING AND WHY MUST I LEAVE? I AM SO HAPPY HERE... AM I NEVER TO SEE MY FRIENDS, THE BULLS, AGAIN?

BE STILL, CHILD... HERE IS FOOD... YOU MUST GO... BUT TAKE THE ADVICE OF DIEGO. AND DO NOT GO NEAR THE BULLS AGAIN.. **YOU** MIGHT BECOME ONE!



AS THE DAYS PASSED... A HOMELESS YOUNG ORPHAN WALKED THE STREETS OF THE SPANISH VILLAGES... BEFRIENDING MANY... ALWAYS TURNED AGAINST, BUT NEVER KNOWING WHY...



BE GONE, LITTLE IMP! I CANNOT SELL MY BULLS WITH YOU AROUND!

I DO THEM NO HARM, SENOR! SEE? THEY LIKE ME?

AND WHY SHOULDN'T THEY LIKE YOU, **IMP**? HAVE YOU LOOKED INTO A MIRROR, LATELY?



THE THING

THE SENOR WAS LOOKING AT THE TOP OF MY HEAD WHEN HE LAUGHED AT ME... HE LOOKED AT *THESE*... SHOULDN'T BE... BUT SURELY, UNDER HIS SOMBRERO, HIS ARE MUCH BETTER THAN MINE!



YES... HE MEANT THAT I SHOULD TAKE BETTER CARE OF THEM. I WILL BEG FOR POLISH TOMORROW AND CLEAN MINE!



POLISH? WHAT CAN A POOR BOY, WITHOUT EVEN SHOES, WANT WITH POLISH?

PLEASE, SENOR... I MUST CLEAN AND SHINE THESE *THINGS* ON MY HEAD SO THAT MINE ARE NOT SO UGLY!



DIABLO! GET AWAY FROM ME, DEMON!!!



HA! HA! HEY. COME SEE THE CHILD WITH **REAL HORNS!**

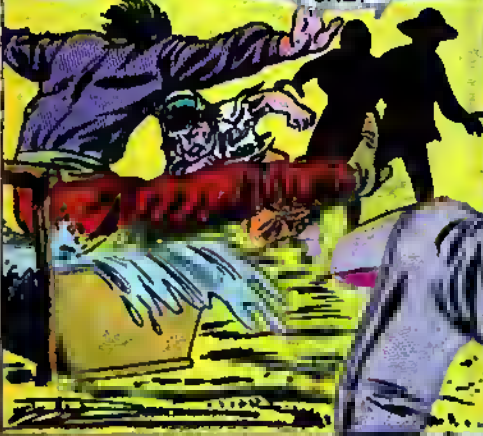
AND LOOK AT HIS UGLY FACE... THE FACE AND HORNS OF A BULL!

TELL ME, LITTLE ONE, WHY ARE YOU SO FUNNY? WHAT ARE YOU CALLED?



AGH!! THE DEVIL ATTACKS US... **RUN!!!**

YES, QUICKLY! WE MUST WARN THE VILLAGE OF THE PRESENCE OF THIS EVIL ONE!



WITH THE BITTER TEARS OF RESENTMENT AND HUMILIATION FLOWING DOWN HIS UGLY FACE, YOUNG TOMAS HERNANDEZ BROKE AWAY FROM THE EXCITED CROWDS... AND FLED TO THE HILLS.



THE THING

WHERE HE HID FROM PEOPLE FOR DAYS AND BROODED...

THEY LAUGHED AT ME... THEY SAID I HAD THE HORNS OF A BULL ON MY HEAD... I MUST COVER THESE THINGS AND NEVER LET ANYONE SEE THEM ANYMORE!

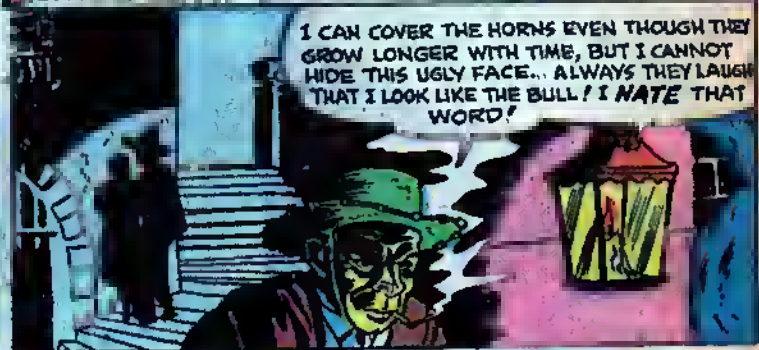


NO! NO! IT IS TRUE! IN MADRID A DOCTOR CAN MAKE EVEN THE UGLIEST FACE INTO ANY SHAPE FOR A HUGE SUM OF PESOS. YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK LIKE A BULL ANYMORE...

IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, DOG, I WILL DO WHAT YOU SAY... I WILL EARN A FORTUNE KILLING THE BULLS I HATE... BUT FOR YOUR BAD HUMOR... YOUR RIDICULE...



BUT FINALLY TOMAS DRIFTED DOWN FROM THE HILLS... AFTER YEARS SWIFTLY PROSE



I CAN COVER THE HORNS EVEN THOUGH THEY GROW LONGER WITH TIME, BUT I CANNOT HIDE THIS UGLY FACE... ALWAYS THEY LAUGH THAT I LOOK LIKE THE BULL! I HATE THAT WORD!

HEY THERE.. SENOR BULL! I THINK IT WOULD BE A FUNNY THING IF YOU WOULD BE A MATADOR... THEN BULL MEETS BULL, HUH? HA-HA! LOOK AT THAT FACE!



PLEASE, SENOR... DO NOT KILL ME! I ONLY MEANT YOU WOULD EARN ENOUGH PESOS SLAYING THE BULLS SO THAT YOU COULD GO TO A PLASTIC SURGEON IN MADRID TO MOLD YOUR FACE INTO THE HANDSOMEST OF CABALLEROS!



EXPLAIN YOURSELF... OR I'LL...

... YOU DIE!!!

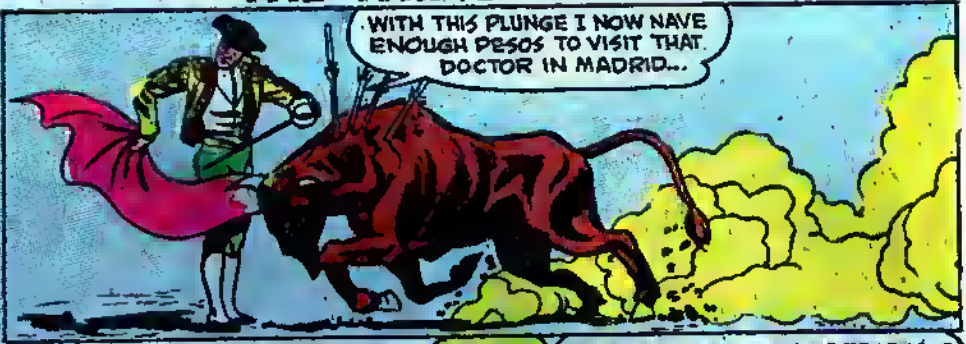


AGGH!



THE THING

THE SCREAM OF THE DYING PEON WAS SOON REPLACED BY THE SCREAMS OF HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE AS A BRAVE NEW MATADOR WHO LOOKED MORE LIKE THE BULL THAN THE BULL ITSELF... BESTED BEAST AFTER BEAST...



WITH THIS PLUNGE I NOW HAVE ENOUGH PESOS TO VISIT THAT DOCTOR IN MADRID...

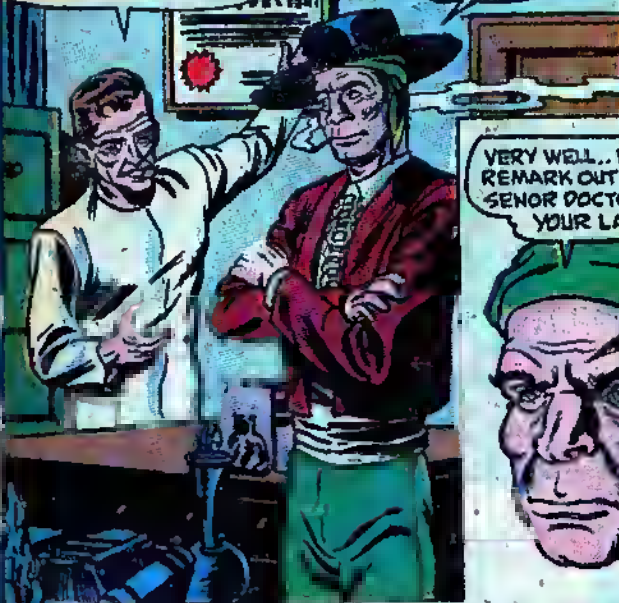
AND SOON IN MADRID... A FEW INQUIRIES ARE MADE... A FEW ANSWERS GIVEN... AND...

I SEE, SENOR HERNANDEZ. SUCH AN OPERATION IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE... IN FACT I AM ALMOST POSITIVE I CAN GIVE YOU THE HANDSOME FACE YOU INQUIRE ABOUT!

THEN WHAT WAS TOLD ME WAS TRUE! I WANT YOU TO PROCEED AT ONCE DOCTOR, AND I EXPECT THE MOST HANDSOME FACE IN ALL SPAIN!

BUT IF YOU FAIL ME... RIDICULE ME...

NOW, NOW... CONTROL YOUR TEMPER... I WILL NOT FAIL YOU, SENOR... IN FACT, WE WILL BEGIN AT ONCE, TAKE OFF YOUR BANDANA!



VERY WELL... BUT ONE REMARK OUT OF THE WAY, SENOR DOCTOR... WILL BE YOUR LAST!

YOU GASP, EN? THEY ARE REAL, I ASSURE YOU, DOCTOR! I WISH YOU TO REMOVE THEM DURING THE OPERATION!

PLEASE, SENOR... I MUST HAVE AN X-RAY!



WATER...
WELL!
I AM SORRY, SENOR HERNANDEZ... I CANNOT REMOVE YOUR HOR... AHEN... YOUR GROWTHS. THE ROOTS ARE TOO CLOSE TO THE BRAIN. DO NOT BE DISHEARTENED, YOU WILL BE COMPENSATED WITH A HANDSOME FACE!

THEN WE DO NOT CRY OVER WHAT YOU CANNOT DO, SENOR DOCTOR... PROCEED WITH WHAT YOU CAN DO!

FINE... NOW IF YOU WILL JUST STEP INSIDE!



THE THING

THE OPERATION COMPLETE, TOMAS HERNANDEZ IS FORCED TO SPEND THE FOLLOWING WEEKS WITH HIS FACE COMPLETELY BANDAGED...UNTIL ONE DAY...



DO NOT BE SO NERVOUS, SENOR... JUST RELAX...

THERE! A MAGNIFICENT JOB. EVEN IF I DO PRAISE MYSELF! COME TO THE MIRROR AND SEE YOUR NEW SELF, SENOR!

CARAMBA! THAT CANNOT BE ME! EXCEPT FOR THE ACCURSED HORNS, I AM AS HANDSOME AS THE STARS I HAVE BEHELD IN THE CINEMA... EVEN BETTER! I AM MOST PLEASED!



AND SO, OUR HERO BEGAN A NEW LIFE IN A NEW VILLAGE. AND HIS HANDSOME FACE IMMEDIATELY BEGOT HIM MANY ADMIRING FRIENDS... AND OF COURSE... SENORITAS...

AND HE WAS ENCOURAGED TO MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF HIMSELF...

WHY DO YOU ALWAYS WEAR THE BANDANA, TOMAS?

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, MUCHACHA, I ALWAYS CAUGHT HEADCOLDS... SO NOW I WEAR THE BANDANA AND I DO NOT CATCH COLO... SIMPLE, NO?



...INTRODUCING A NEW MATADOR, WHOSE SKILL WITH THE SWORD SURPASSES ALL WE HAVE SEEN... SENOR TOMAS HERNANDEZ!

MY, HOW HANDSOME THE NEW MATADOR IS... QUICKLY GIVE ME YOUR ROSE, CONCHITA, THAT I MAY THROW IT TO HIM!

SI, SENORITA INEZ... HE IS SO VERY NICE LOOKING!

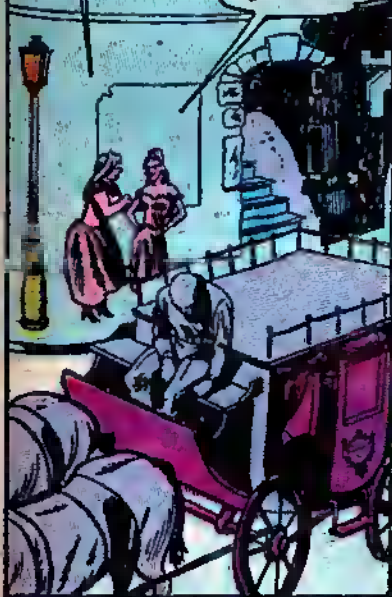


THE THING

LATER

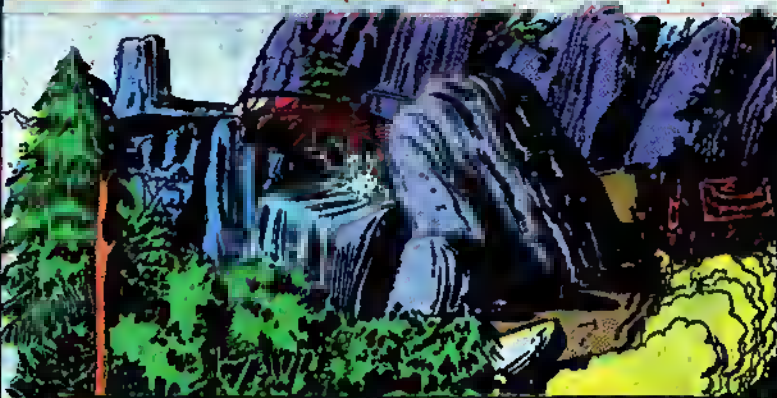
BUT, SENORITA... WE PROMISED WE WOULD RETURN HOME IMMEDIATELY!

QUIET, CONCHITA, DID YOU NOT SEE HOW HE SMILED UP AT ME WHEN I THREW THE ROSE? WE WILL WAIT UNTIL HE COMES TO THE STREET...



HE COMES NOW, CONCHITA... AND SEE? HE SEES ME. HE IS COMING DIRECTLY TO THE CARRIAGE!

BUENAS NOTCHES, SENORITAS... WOULD IT INCONVENIENCE YOU TO GIVE A TIRED YOUNG MAN A LIFT TO THE NEXT VILLAGE?



YES, SENORITA INEZ SAW MUCH OF THE HANDSOME TOMAS HERNANDEZ AFTER THEIR FIRST FLIRTATIOUS MEETING... IN FACT, SOON AFTER THAT THEY DECIDED TO BECOME MAN AND WIFE... HE WITH HIS GOOD LOOKS, AND SHE WITH HER WEALTH AND PRESTIGE...

THEIR ADORATION WAS THE TALK OF SPANISH SOCIETY...

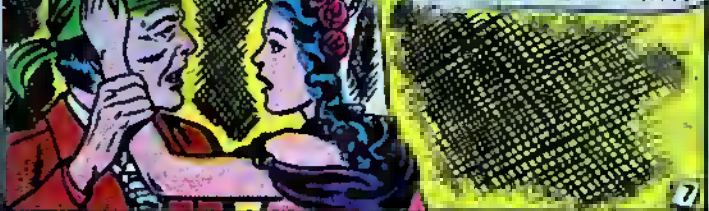
I HAVE NEVER LOVED ANYTHING NOR ANYONE SO MUCH AS YOU... I SWEAR IT!

OH, TOMAS... WHAT A TIME TO TELL ME YOU LOVE ME... RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF MY UNCLE'S GRAND FIESTA... AND BEFORE ALL THESE PEOPLE. COME, LET'S JOIN THE MERRIMENT!



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

ONLY REMOVING YOUR BANDANA, SWEET HEART. YOU MUST NOT WEAR SUCH A THING TO THIS FIESTA. BESIDES YOU ARE SO HANDSOME YOU DO NOT NEED SUCH THINGS!



THE THING

NO! I HAVE TAKEN A SOLEMN OATH THAT I WOULD NEVER REMOVE THIS CLOTH UNTIL... WELL, IT IS MY SECRET, INEZ... LEAVE IT AS SUCH!

AS YOU WISH, DARLING... YOU NEEDN'T FROWN AT ME!



BUT FOR HIS BURNING LOVE FOR INEZ, TOMAS THREW CAUTION TO THE WINDS...

YOUR FATHER SPEAKS OF SECURITY BEFORE HE WILL GIVE YOU IN MARRIAGE... THEN TELL YOUR FATHER I HAVE ENTERED THE GRAND BULLFIGHT.. WITH MORE THAN ENOUGH SECURITY TO BE EARNED FOR ANY MARRIAGE!

OH, TOMAS... HE WILL GLADLY GIVE HIS CONSENT WHEN I TELL HIM. I KNOW!



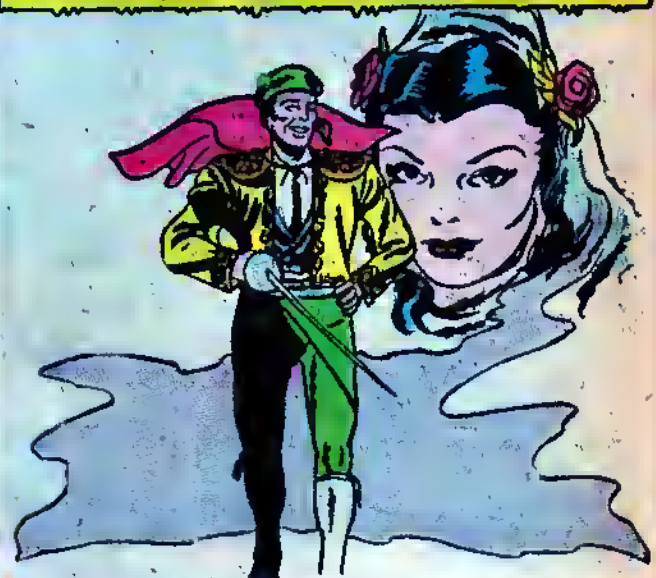
THERE WAS APPLAUSE AND CHEERS... AND LOOKING UP FROM THE ARENA INTO HIS BELOVED'S SWEET FACE, TOMAS WAS EVER GRATEFUL FOR HIS NEW FEATURES... HIS NEW LIFE...



TOMAS WASN'T AS HAPPY AS HE HOPED TO BE! EVEN THOUGH HE MADE A PRETENSE OF BEING CARE-FREE, THE HORNS WERE STILL ON HIS HEAD... HORNS THAT INEZ, OR ANY GIRL WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND



THUS ONCE AGAIN, TOMAS HERNANDEZ WAS TO FACE THE CHEERING CROWDS OF THE BULLFIGHT ARENA. AS THE COLORFUL PROCESSION ENTERED THE ARENA, HE HEARD THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS PENDING MARRIAGE TO THE BEAUTIFUL SENORITA INEZ, AND HIS HEART SWELLED WITH PRIDE...



IT WASN'T UNTIL HE WAS SO ARTFULLY DOING THE ENRAGED BULL THAT TOMAS BECAME AWARE OF THE HORROR THAT THIS BEAST COULD VERY EASILY DISFIGURE HIM... AND MAKE HIM UGLY ONCE AGAIN...



THE THING

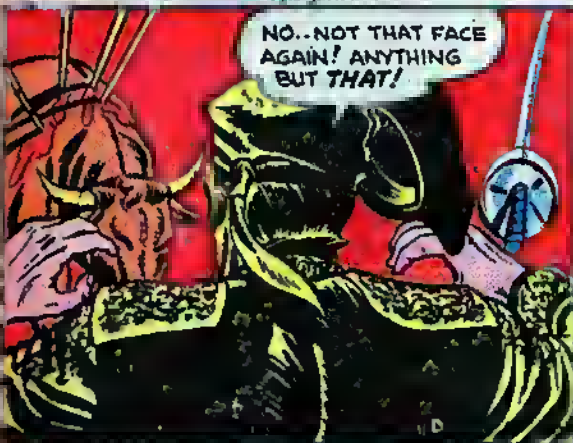
FEAR HAD CONTROL OF TOMAS BY NOW AND TRY AS HE WOULD, HE COULD NOT THRUST HIS BLADE INTO THE CHARGING ANIMAL - INSTEAD HE GAVE GROUND UNTIL THE BULL WAS ACTUALLY THE ONE AFTER THE KILL...



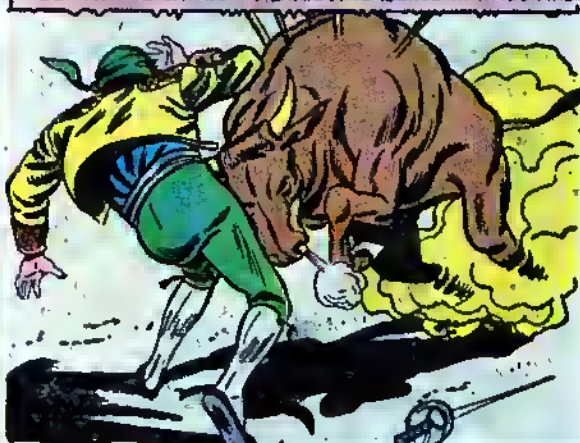
AND THE MORE TOMAS BACKED AND COWERED, THE MORE FEROCIOUS THE BULL BECAME... UNTIL EVEN TOMAS SENSED THE BULL WAS TO BE THE VICTOR... AND IT FRIGHTENED HIM AS NEVER BEFORE...



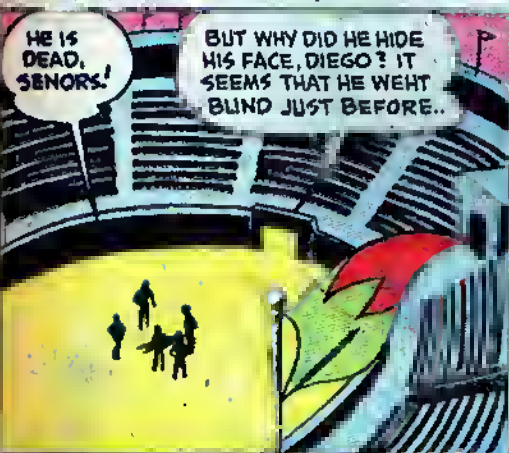
BUT THEN HE FORGOT ABOUT THE BULL. AS HE FELT THE SUDDEN PULLING AND TWISTING OF HIS FACIAL MUSCLES... AND REALIZED THE EMOTIONAL SHOCK OF FACING MUTILATION WAS CHANGING HIS FACE BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL SHAPE...



TOMAS COVERED HIS FACE WITH HIS HANDS SO THAT HIS BELOVED INEZ WOULD NOT SEE WHAT HE HAD BECOME. AN INSTANT LATER THE CROWD GASPED TO ITS FEET AS THE CHARGING BULL AND BLIND MATADOR MET!



THEY HAD TO CARRY THE HYSTERICAL INEZ FROM THE ARENA... WHERE SHE COLLAPSED... FOR TOMAS WAS NOT QUICK ENOUGH TO HIDE WHAT HAD HAPPENED FROM HER... AND TOMAS...?



NO, SENORS... HE DID NOT GO BLIND... I THINK IT WAS HIS WISH THAT HE BE DEAD... LOOK WHEN I TURN HIM OVER!



The end

THE WITCH'S HOUSE

Henry Berlin was not the type of man to know fear. He stood well over six feet in height. He was deep-chested and lean-loined, splendidly muscled, with a pair of brown eyes that always looked right at the person to whom he was speaking. And he had built roads from the Yukon to the Amazon. "Don't give me that kind of nonsense," he shouted as he pounded his heavy fist on the table in the construction shack. "This is the twentieth century and witches just don't exist. The county has given me the right to build either on the right or left side of Barrow's Creek. I don't give a hoot who Sara Morgan was! You tell your gang they can start ripping down that stone house tomorrow morning!"

The man who listened to these words was a bald-headed, stockily-built man in his early fifties. Louis Glasgow had been born and raised in the county. He made no effort to leave the shack and Henry Berlin sensed something was wrong. "Now don't tell me that your crew are afraid of a witch who couldn't even save herself. Just see that my orders are followed out."

One hated to differ with a man who had the reputation of building any kind of road in any kind of place. But Louis Glasgow felt it only fair to warn an outsider about the situation. "This is no joking matter, Mr. Berlin," he began, "and when you've spent your life in this community you see and understand things that maybe don't make sense outside. Sara Morgan was a real witch. They stoned her to death back in 1823 and she said she would never die because she could always use another body. And if you try anything with her house there's a curse of death on it. Take a tip from me, you can run that section of the road through the left side of the Creek."

"Where's that engineer of mine?" demanded Berlin in neither soft nor uncertain words. "We'll see what she has to say about this stupidity." The door to the shack was opened and on the threshold stood a young miss of not more than twenty-one or two, wearing a long pair of jeans and a checkered sport shirt. Her golden hair was cut short. Elsie Cabot was the youngest female engineer in the state and proud of it. "Want me, Mr. Berlin?" she softly said. "Something worrying you?"

"Will you tell this fool of a road boss that witches just don't exist? You're a college graduate and know all about this belonging to the imagination of frightened people." Elsie shrugged her shoulders. "How can I tell a man who is or who isn't a witch; what or what not to believe? You don't believe a witch exists. Louis Glasgow does. That's all!" And before Berlin could reply, Elsie left the shack.

When a man is determined to do something, it's going to be done, especially when he has built his life and reputation on that fact. So Henry Berlin went over to the small bunkhouse where he kept his special crew of trouble shooters, the boys who always went with him on every job. Lloyd Ellman was sitting on his bunk when his boss came in. "Get a heavy hammer and come with me. Got a job for you to do in a hurry." Lloyd got off the bunk and picked up a heavy demolition hammer that was in the corner of the room. The two men went outside and climbed into a jeep. Twenty minutes later they stopped before an old iron rusty gate which surrounded the place that once housed Sara Morgan. There was a small metal plaque which read, "Leave this house in peace, or your troubles will ne'er cease." Henry Berlin read the words aloud. Then he noticed Lloyd was staring at a large black cat about twenty feet from the gate. Berlin picked up a heavy stone and threw it at the animal. It hit one of the cat's paws and the animal ran away. "Open or smash this gate," ordered Berlin, "but let's get started at once."

Lloyd had a better idea. "This old rusty chain is just strung around the gate. I'll lift it up and remove it." As he started to move the chain, he shrieked in pain. "Oooooooh! Bit of metal must have gotten into my finger!" Like a child, he put the finger into his mouth. Annoyed, Berlin lifted the hammer and brought it down with all his force on the metal gate. A metal spike tore loose and gashed the side of his face.

Dr. Edmond Carley had finished bandaging the wound. "If no infection sets in, you can consider yourself lucky. You almost lost your left eye." Watching the entire scene as a disinterested spectator was Elsie Cabot. There was a band-aid on her left arm. As Dr. Carley was about to leave he noticed her arm. "Want me to look at



it, Miss Cabot?" In return he received a slight smile with a negative nod of the head.

There was no sleep that night for Henry Berlin, even though the pain had subsided. He was sitting in a chair in his private little house when there was a knock on the door. "Who's there?" he demanded. "It's me — Lou Glasgow." Berlin turned the latch bolt and looked into the eyes of a frightened man. "Lloyd's arm has swollen to almost triple size. The phone doesn't work and I sent one of the boys for Doc Carley." And then Berlin remembered something. This time he had slipped up. Lloyd hadn't even told the doctor about that piece of metal in his hand. What if tetanus set in?

When Dr. Carley arrived, Lloyd Ellman was a corpse. "I'll have to make an autopsy in the morning," advised the physician. "This just doesn't make sense. In that short space of time, tetanus can't be so deadly. Some kind of poison must have gotten into his system."

Berlin and Glasgow went to the car with the doctor and then they saw it — the black cat! Glasgow was a ghastly white as he stared at the animal. "All this because you won't let that witch house alone," he chided his boss. "There's Sara right now. Give you a last warning. Lucky you didn't lose an eye or get killed. Forget about that house, please Mr. Berlin, if you want to live."

The only answer that Berlin gave was to go automatically to his hip pocket, but the gun wasn't there. It was back in his shack. He knew now he would have to carry the gun and kill that cat, or else.

In the morning there was an ugly undertone among the men. Louis Glasgow reported that the crew refused to work on the section of the road which included demolishing the witch's house. Elsie Cabot had very little to say. "You don't want any advice, Mr. Berlin. You're the type of man who is going to do what he wants to, even if he loses his life in the bargain!"

Henry Berlin was about to say, "You're darn right," but he stopped the words before they passed his lips. Instead he went and got his gun. Then he shoved four sticks of dynamite in his coat pocket with some fuses. He headed for the shack where two of his remaining trouble shoot-

ers were talking about recent events. Jim Tighe and Frank Delaney listened to their boss. "Get into the jeep and we'll drive right up to that witch's house. I'm going to blast that place into eternity."

Jim was at the wheel of the jeep when they spotted the black cat. He jammed on the brakes. The car hit a stone and went over on its side. Frank Delaney and his boss jumped clear of the car but Jim was pinned in it. When they got him out, he was dead with a crushed chest. The cat watched the entire scene as though she knew exactly what had happened. Berlin went for the gun in his pocket. The first shot missed. His second creased the cat in the neck and drew blood. The animal ran right between his legs and upset him. As he fell his finger pulled on the trigger, sending a bullet right into Delaney's brain.

The man who had built the Berlin Construction Company from a small outfit to one of many millions was no longer a rational creature. He tied the four sticks of dynamite, inserted a fuse, and with his cigarette lighter, touched the end of the fuse. Then he threw them at the building and ran. He waited for the explosion but nothing happened. He watched the second hand on his wrist watch until he knew it was safe to pick up the sticks of dynamite that had lodged in the iron gate. He walked about a hundred yards from the place and placed his hand in his pocket for another fuse where there was a terrible explosion. Only a watchful cat could have told the sheriff what had happened.

The road was finally finished with Elsie Cabot in charge and they used the alternate section, leaving the witch's house untouched. A sorrowful state legislature passed a bill calling the road "Berlin's Highway." On the day they opened that section, Louis Glasgow remarked to Elsie Cabot, "taking a long time for that wound on your neck to heal. Glad you weren't hurt badly. Better be careful when you wear those high-heel shoes. Say, I wonder if Berlin ever knew you are the only remaining blood relative of Sara Morgan." To which Elsie merely replied, "sometimes I think you talk a bit too much for your own good."

—THE END—

THE THING

THE

CREATURE

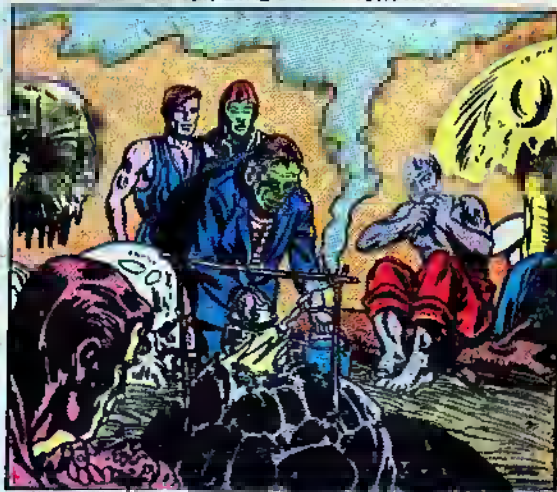


TYLER
FORGIONE

DOCTOR RIKO, PHYSICIST, LAUNCHED AN APE INTO A NEW DIMENSION AND BROUGHT A WEIRD, SLIMEY CREATURE TO THE CREATURE... WHO FIRST LANDED ON THE BATTLEFIELD OF KOREA AND WAS LATER IMPRISONED BY THE STEEL BULK OF A TANK THAT IS NOW BEING INSPECTED BY THE ARMY IN WASHINGTON... BUT COME NOW TO EARTH...

YES, THIS IS THE EARTH YOU SEE... FOR WHILE THE CREATURE HAS REMAINED IMPRISONED IN THE STEEL BULK OF A CAPTURED RUSSIAN TANK, A STRANGE CALAMITY HAS RUN RAMPANT ACROSS THE FACE OF THE EARTH...

DISTORTING EVERY CORNER OF THE GLOBE WITH UGLY GROWTHS... MANY PEOPLE ARE HOMELESS, NOW... AND MOST EVERY PERSON, THE VICTIM OF OPEN SORES AND CANCER-LIKE IRRITATIONS...



THE THING

IN THE CAPITOL OF EVERY NATION, THE WISE AND THE GREAT MEN ARE HUDDLED IN CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS THE CAUSE OF THE WEIRD CATASTROPHE... BUT ALL THEIR KNOWLEDGE IS UNABLE TO COMBAT THE CONSTANT SPREAD OF THE GROWTHS...

IN WASHINGTON, THE PRESIDENT BROADCASTS TO THE PEOPLE OF AMERICA EVERY MORNING... URGING THEM NOT TO SUCCEMB TO PANIC... ASSURING THEM THE GROWTHS WILL EVENTUALLY BE CONTROLLED... BUT PANICS AND RIOTS OCCUR DAILY.

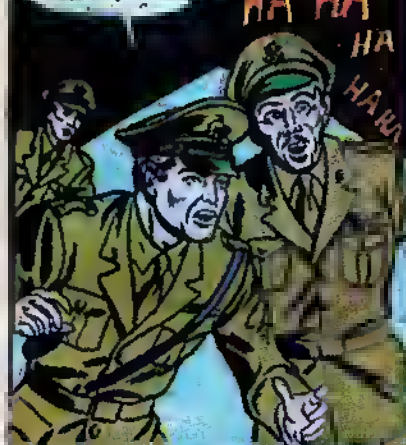


RUN! THE GROWTHS ARE MOVING THIS WAY AGAIN!



AND IN THE PENTAGON BUILDING... LISTEN! LAUGHTER! HEAR IT? ONLY OCCASIONALLY DOES ONE HEAR A MAN LAUGH... AND EVEN THEN IT'S A FRIGHTENING SOUND... FOR LAUGHTER, OF LATE ONLY COMES FROM A MIND THAT HAS CRACKED WITH THE STRAIN... ONLY THE INSANE LAUGH! LISTEN!

IT'S COMING FROM INSIDE THE TESTING ROOM, SIR!



MAJOR! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YES, YES... IT'S THIS TANK I'M TESTING... I'M SORRY I DISTURBED YOU, SIR. THIS NEW RUSSIAN TANK THAT WAS CAPTURED ON THE KOREAN FRONT... IT'S SO RIDICULOUS IT WOULD MAKE ANY SOLDIER LAUGH...

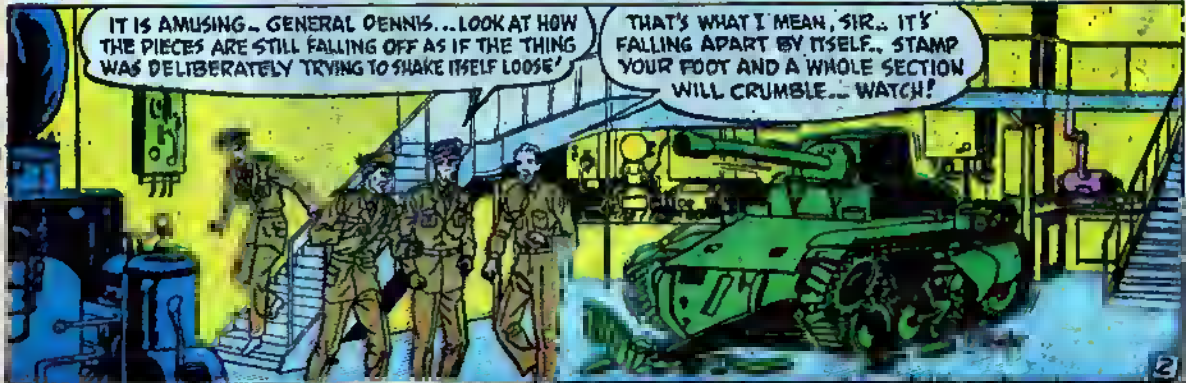


JUST LOOK AT HOW IT FALLS APART WHEN I WANK AT ONE OF THE SECTIONS... WHY A GOOD STORM WOULD BLOW IT TO PIECES!



IT IS AMUSING... GENERAL DENNIS... LOOK AT HOW THE PIECES ARE STILL FALLING OFF AS IF THE THING WAS DELIBERATELY TRYING TO SHAKE ITSELF LOOSE!

THAT'S WHAT I MEAN, SIR... IT'S FALLING APART BY ITSELF... STAMP YOUR FOOT AND A WHOLE SECTION WILL CRUMBLE... WATCH!



THE THING

NO THE MAJOR WASN'T INSANE, MERELY AMUSED, HE SAID... THEN HE STAMPED HIS FOOT. THE TREMBLING TANK SEEMED TO FALL APART, AND IN ITS PLACE...



QUICKLY, MAJOR! WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S GOING OUT OF THAT WINDOW... STOP IT IF YOU CAN! USE YOUR PISTOL, MAN!

HA, HA, HA!
GURGLE! GURGLE!
HEH, HEH!



MAJOR! IT'S NO USE, SIR... THE MAJOR'S MIND MUST HAVE SHAPPED WHEN HE SAW THAT THING!
DON'T TALK! THAT SHAPE... UGH! MY MIND IS STILL ROCKING... ANYWAY, IT'S GONE... I CAN'T SEE IT! THANK GOODNESS!



BUT WHILE KATU'S CREATURE FROM THE WORLD OF BREWON MAKES GOOD ITS ESCAPE, IT FINDS ITSELF DAZED AND STUNNED... AND IT LUMBERS CLUMSILY TO A PLACE OF SECLUSION...



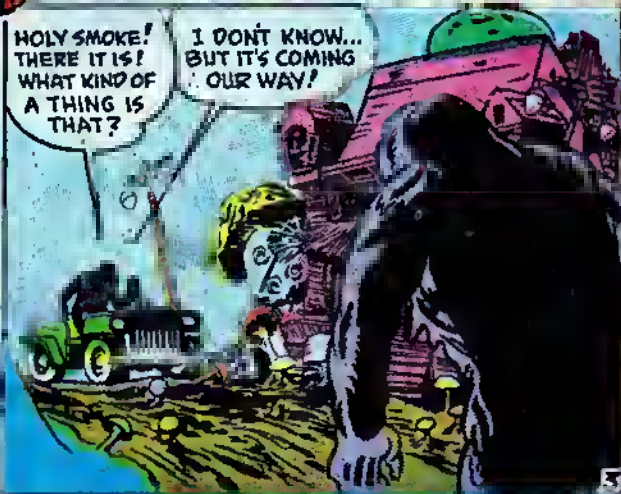
WHILE THE CREATURE LUMBERS SLOWLY THROUGH THE HORRIBLE BACK STREETS OF WASHINGTON, THE ARMY ORDERS EVERY AVAILABLE SOLDIER TO HUNT THE MASSIVE, UNKNOWN THING!



BUT THE CREATURE DOESN'T KNOW IT IS BEING STALKED...

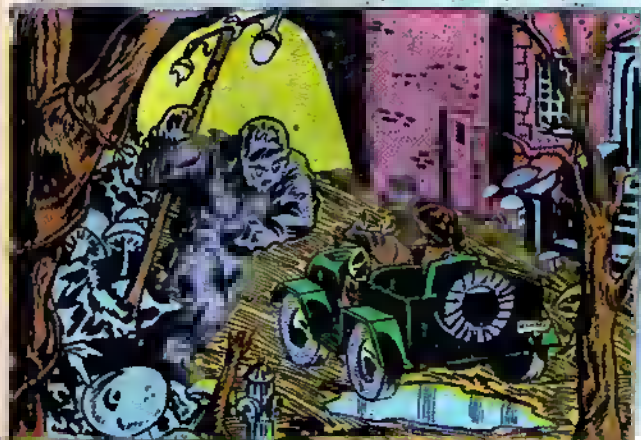
HOLY SMOKE! THERE IT IS! WHAT KIND OF A THING IS THAT?

I DON'T KNOW... BUT IT'S COMING OUR WAY!

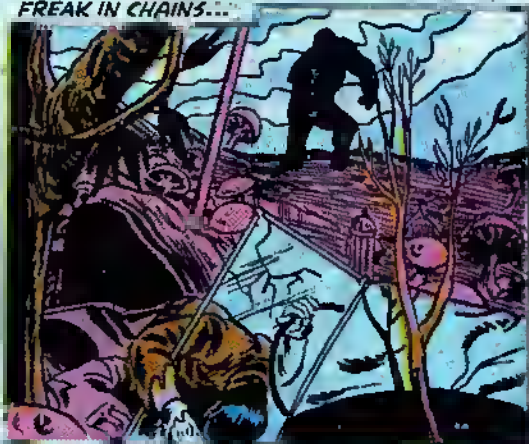


THE THING

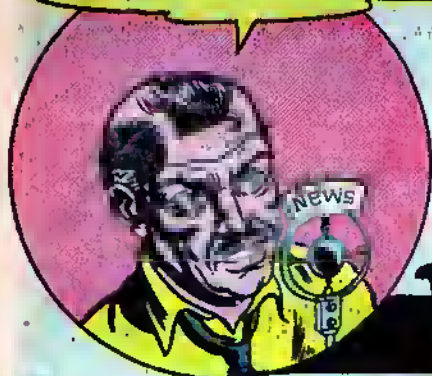
THE CREATURE FINDS ITSELF SURPRISED...HEAVY...SLOW...EVEN CLUMSY. BUT IT SENSES THE MIND OF THE TWO SOLDIERS. THAT THEY MEAN HIM HARM, AND STAGGERING. IT CHARGES THE JEEP...



EVEN AS THE CREATURE TURNS, PLODS AWAY FROM THE SCENE... STILL OAZED BY A HEAVY PRESSURE UPON ITS BODY...PLANS ARE PUT INTO EFFECT THAT WOULD TEND TO PUT THIS FREAK IN CHAINS...



LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THIS IS TRUE REARSON REPORTING. I HAVE A REQUEST FROM THE ARMY, ASKING EVERY CITIZEN TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A HUGE ANIMAL RESEMBLING A BEAR, WHICH IS LOOSE IN THE CAPITAL. IF YOU SEE SUCH A CREATURE, REPORT TO THE ARMY IMMEDIATELY...



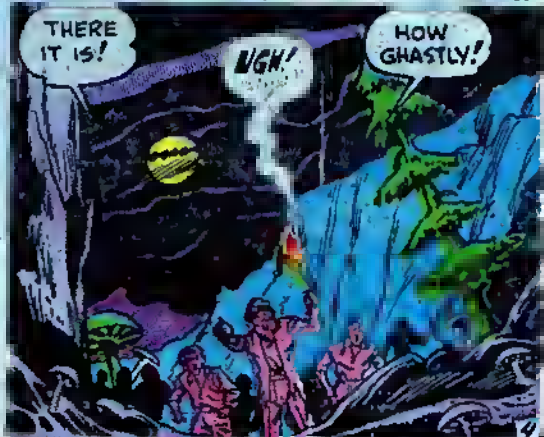
LATER IN THE DAY, SEVERAL YELLOW JOURNALS PLAYED UP THE STORY AND CONDUCTED A WEIRD THEORY, ENDORSED BY A CRACK SCIENTIST... THE HUNT OF THE CREATURE WAS THE BIGGEST SEARCH OUR NATION HAD EVER KNOWN...



YES, MAN HAD TRIED TO MAKE A SCAPEGOAT OF THE CREATURE... THE PUBLIC, SEEKING TO BE RID OF THE CURSE OF THE HORRIBLE GROWTHS, QUICKLY BELIEVED THE MAD TALE... AND EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD RUSHED INTO THE HILLS... THE WILD HUNT WAS ON...

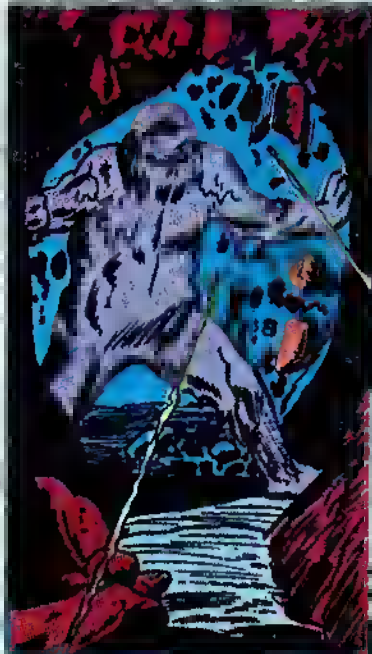


FRENZIED MOBS, HYSTERICAL WITH EMOTION... SCREAMING, CURSING... PUSHING MOBS COMBED THE ENTIRE NATION... FINALLY TOWARD DUSK, THE DAZED CREATURE WAS FOUND IN A DARK CAVE...



THE THING

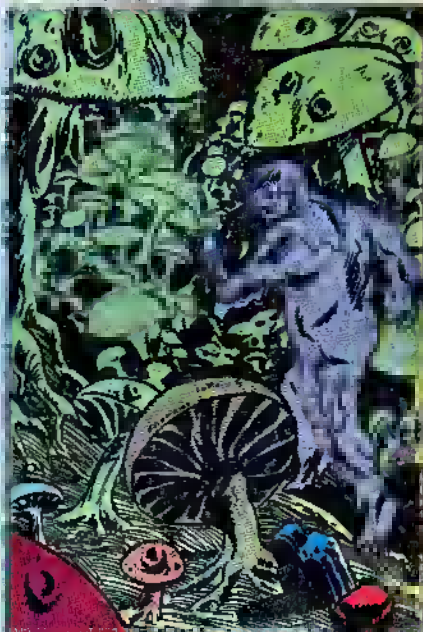
SHOTS WERE FIRED AT THE STARTLED CREATURE. THEY MISSED, BUT SO ENRAGED WAS THE FORMLESS MASS AT THE ASSAULT, THAT IT FORCED ITS STRENGTH AND GREW AND DELIBERATELY CRACKED THE HILL WIDE OPEN--



SHOWERING THE MOB WITH FALLING STONES AND BOULGERS UNTIL THEY ALL SCATTERED IN PANIC--



THE CREATURE FLED, TOO.. BUT HIS HUGE SIZE GAVE HIM AWAY AND THERE WERE MOBS OF PEOPLE CHASING IT... THAT IS, UNTIL IT RUSHED INTO A FOREST OF GIGANTIC GROWTHS... THEN THE CHASING STOPPED, FOR NO MAN WOULD ENTER ANY THICKET OF THE STRANGE PLANTS...



NO HERE, THE CREATURE SOUGHT TO LOSE ITS SICKNESS... TO REGAIN ITS WIT... HOWEVER, THE REST DID NO GOOD. INSTEAD, THE CREATURE ONLY CAME UPON A LONE MAN-- STUDYING THE THICKET OF GROWTHS.



A MAN WHO WAS NOT STARTLED WHEN HE SAW THIS SLIMEY FORM OF THE CREATURE... A WISE MAN WHOSE THOUGHTS THE CREATURE IMMEDIATELY SENSED--



THEY HUNT THIS POOR CREATURE WHILE THE CAUSE OF THESE TERRIBLE GROWTHS OBVIOUSLY COMES FROM THE GRAVITY PULL OF THAT NEW PLANET MOVING INTO OUR ORBIT... WHAT A DITY MEN ARE SUCH FOOLS!



THE THING

THE CREATURE'S EYES FOLLOWED THE STARE OF DR. ZUPA TO A BRIGHT TWINKLING IN THE HEAVENS. IT SENSED THIS WAS THE REASON IT COULD NOT FEEL FREE OF THE HEAVY PRESSURE...



ANNO BEFORE DR. ZUPA'S AMAZED EYES, THE MASSIVE CREATURE CHANGED INTO A WISP OF THIN AIR... TO DO BATTLE WITH THIS EVIL POWER...



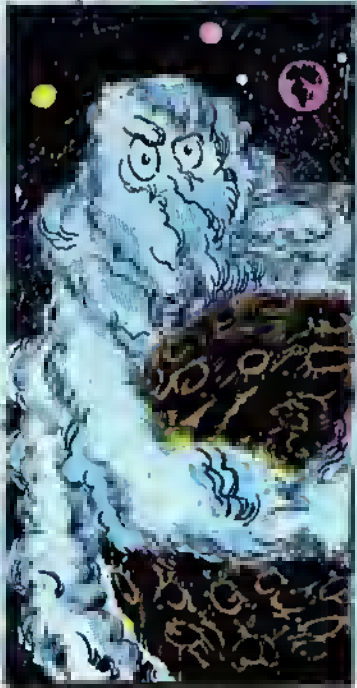
RISING INTO THE HEAVENS UNTIL THE EARTH WAS BUT A SPOT BELOW..



BUT IT DID NOT LAND ON THE FOREIGN PLANET... FOR, AS IT APPROACHED, SO GREATLY HAD THE 'POWER' OF THE GLOBE INCREASED... THAT THE...



CREATURE BECAME ENRAGED AND CHANGED FROM A WISP OF AIR INTO A HUGE CLOUD FORMATION THAT COMPLETELY SURROUNDED THE SMALL PLANET...

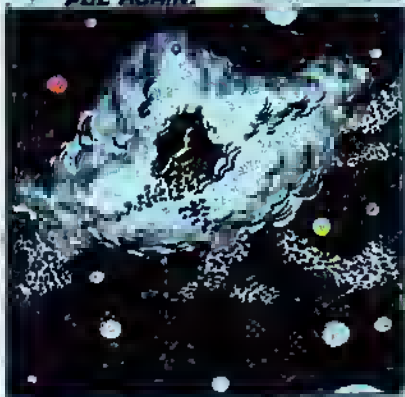


FOR THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS THE CREATURE HURLED ELECTRIC BOLTS DOWN UPON THE SMALL PLANET FROM EVERY DIRECTION... BURNING IT TO A CRISP AS IT FELT THIS TERRIBLE 'POWER' DECREASE ITS HOLD...

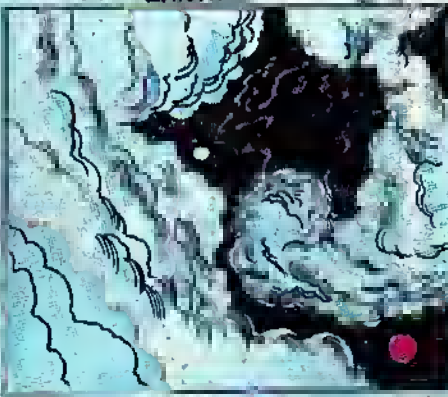


THE THING

AND FINALLY THE POWER OF THE GLOBE WAS NO MORE... THE HUGE DARK CINDER CRUMBLING TO DUST AND SCATTERED THROUGH THE HEAVENS... THE CREATURE FELT FREE AND POWERFUL AGAIN!



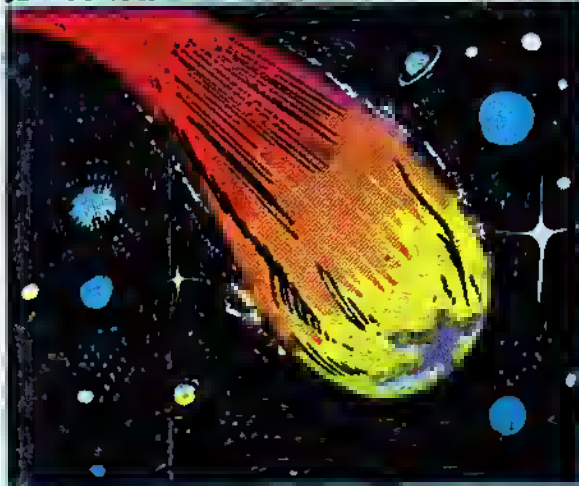
AND THE DARK CLOUDS WERE NO MORE, FOR THE GREAT, BLACK, THUNDERING MASSES SWIRLED IN THE SKIES UNTIL THEY CHANGED INTO A WISP OF AIR ONCE AGAIN... AS THE CREATURE STARTED BACK FOR EARTH...



BUT THE JOY OF THE CREATURE WAS OVER-ABUNDANT... FOR AS IT DESCENDED THE STRATOSPHERE... ENJOYING ITS UNINHIBITED STRENGTH.



...IT INADVERTENTLY CROSSED THE PATH OF A BLAZING METEOR... A MOLTEN MASS OF IRON AND STEEL THAT SEEMED TO SCOOP THE CREATURE UP AND--



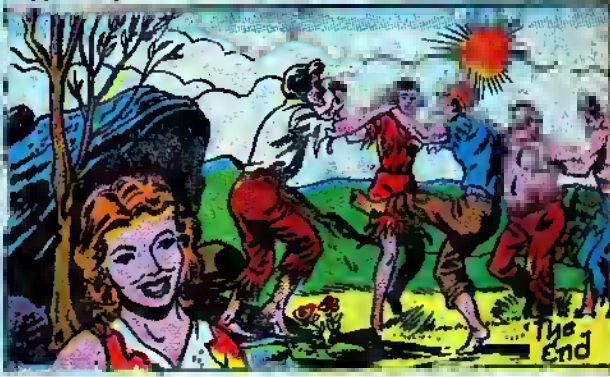
...PIHIT BENEATH SEARING, SPLASHING ORE, AS THE METEOR SLAMMED AGAINST THE WORLD AND BURROWED DEEP BENEATH ITS SURFACE...



YES, ONCE AGAIN THE CREATURE WAS TO BE CAPTURED BY STEEL... STEEL FROM SPACE... ITS LIBERTY FROM THE TANK WAS SHORT-LIVED...

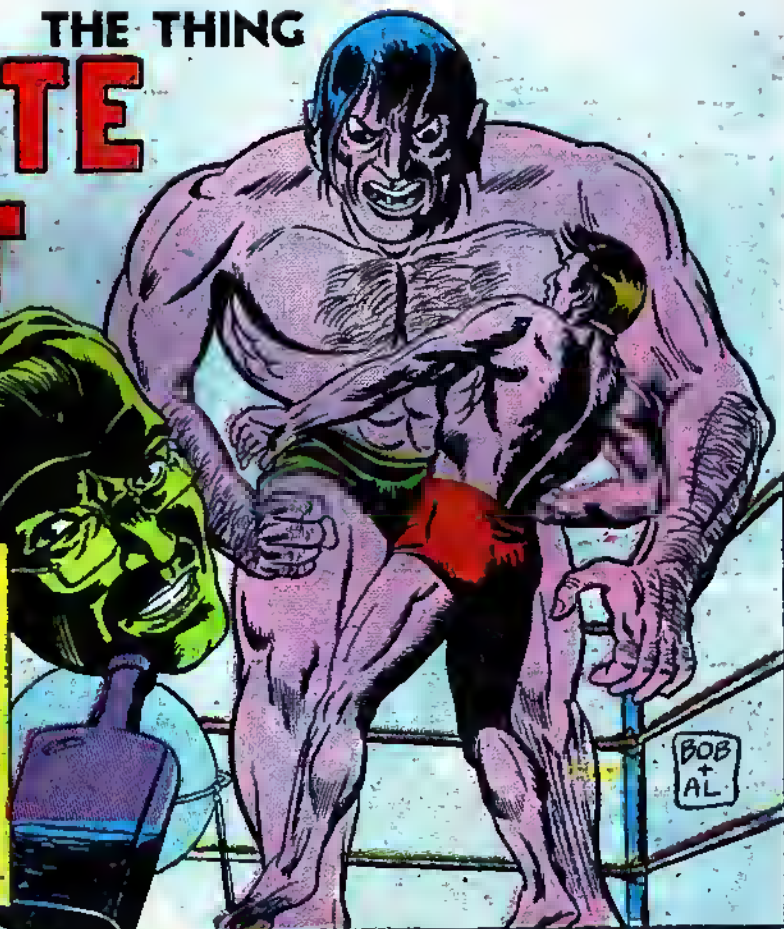


AND ON EARTH, NO ONE HAD TIME TO NOTICE THE STRIKING METEOR FOR THE EARTH WAS SUDDENLY WHOLE AGAIN... THE GROWTHS HAD MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED... CONDITIONS WERE BACK TO NORMAL... PEOPLE WERE HAPPY... THEY FORGOT ALL ABOUT THE CREATURE THEY COULD NEVER FIND ANYMORE... OR THAT IT ACTUALLY EVER EXISTED.



THE WHITE RAT

YOU ARE ABOUT TO READ A STORY THE SPORTING WORLD HAS DENIED IS TRUE, BECAUSE, IN SOME PLACES IT CHALLENGES THE INTELLIGENCE OF MAN... YET, THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO SAW THIS THING HAPPEN... WHO SAT HORRIFIED, AND AFTERWARDS THOUGHT A GREAT HOAX WAS PLAYED UPON THEM AND DENOUNCED THE EPISODE AS A FAKE!



IT BEGAN ON A COLD DISMAL NIGHT IN WINTER... WHEN SNOW COMPLETELY BLANKETED THE CITY OF CHICAGO AND THE FROST CAKED ON WINDOW PANES UNTIL VISION WAS IMPOSSIBLE... A SOLITARY FIGURE FOUGHT THE COLD TO STUMBLE TO AN OBSCURE, BASEMENT DOOR... WHERE COLD, NUMB HANDS POUNDED ON THE DARK WOOD.

THE DOOR CREAKED OPEN... LETTING IN THE SCURRYING, BLINDING SNOW AND THE BITING WINTRY WIND AS A SMALL MAN INSIDE RESPONDS TO THE POUNDING...

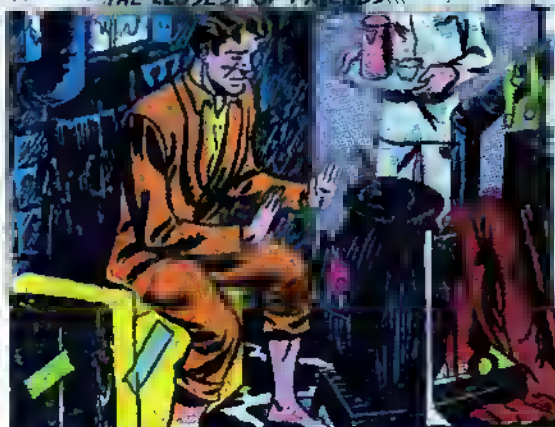
DR. LAZARUS? MY NAME IS ALEX WARREN... I'M YOUR NEW ASSISTANT...

BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME OUT ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS... ALL RIGHT, THERE'S A BURNING FIRE INSIDE... YOU CAN WARM YOURSELF...



THE THING

THE YOUNG MAN HUDDLED CLOSE TO THE HEAT OF THE BURNING FLAMES WHILE THE ELDER BROUGHT WARM COFFEE... AND THAT FIRST NIGHT, IT SEEMED DESTINED THAT THESE TWO MEN WOULD BECOME THE CLOSEST OF FRIENDS...



BUT THE COLD, ICY DAYS THAT FOLLOWED SOON PROVED OTHERWISE... FOR THEY LIVED FOR DIFFERENT GOALS...

HEY, DOC... GET A LOAD OF THOSE SHOULDER MUSCLES, WILL YA? THAT'S WHAT A SHRIMP LIKE YOU NEEDS. REAL MUSCLES!

I PREFER WORKING WITH MY BRAIN, THANK YOU!



AS THE TWO MEN WORKED SIDE BY SIDE IN THE DAMP BASEMENT LABORATORY, DR. LAZARUS NOTED HIS ASSISTANT'S PECULIAR TENDACIES MOUNT...

YA KNOW, YA WOULDN'T BE SO BAD AT ALL, DOC, IF YA'D TAKE A BODY BUILDING COURSE! UNDER ALL THIS FLAB, I BET YA GOT A PRETTY GOOD PHYSIQUE... FOR A SHRIMP!

oof!



AND MOUNT... AND MOUNT!

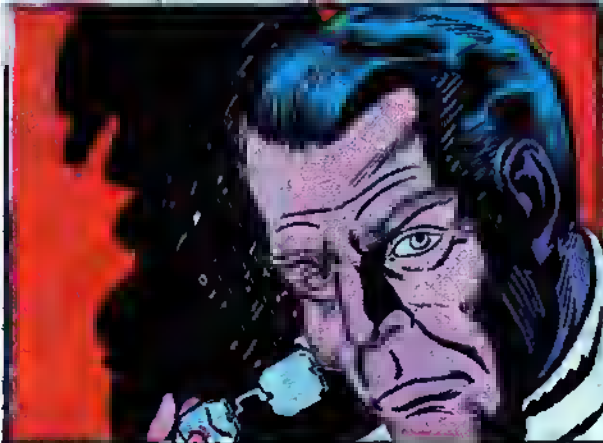
HEY, DOC... HOW'S THIS FOR AN ARM LOCK, HUH? I MEAN JUST TRY TO BREAK THIS GRIP, BOY!

YOU'RE HURTING ME! YOU BIG LUMMOX! I HAVE MY WORK TO DO!



AT THE END OF THE FIRST MONTH, THE FANTASTIC STORY GOES, DR. LAZARUS SO DESPISED THE ECCENTRIC TACTICS OF HIS ASSISTANT, THAT HE WOULD OFTEN GLARE AT THE YOUNGER MAN AND WISH HE HAD THE STRENGTH TO TEACH HIS ASSISTANT A MUCH DESERVED LESSON...

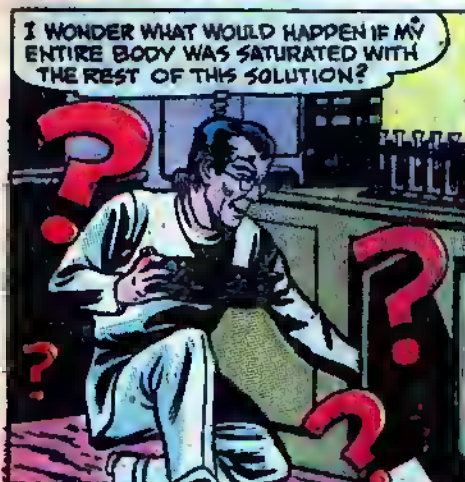
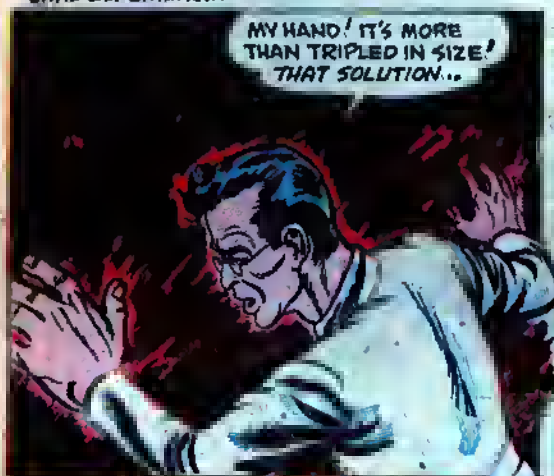
BUT BEING A MAN OF SLIGHT BUILD, IT WAS USELESS TO EVEN CONSIDER THE IDEA... THAT IS UNTIL LATE ONE NIGHT...



THE THING

DR LAZARUS WAS HORRIFIED TO FIND A SIMPLE ACCIDENT RESULTED IN A FRIGHTENING PHENOMENAL EXPERIENCE.

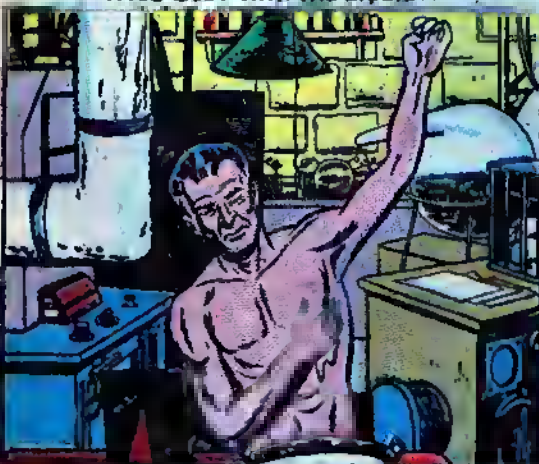
TOO STUPEFIED TO MOVE, THE DOCTOR GAZED AT THE CALAMITY HE ONCE CALLED HIS HAND... AND THEN, JUST AS SUDDENLY...



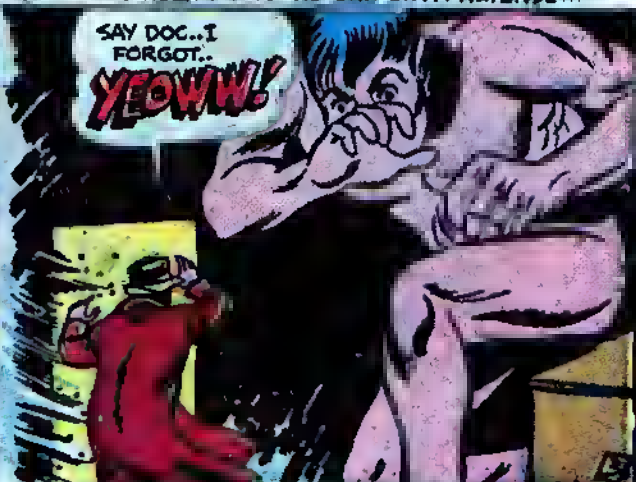
EARLY THAT NEXT MORNING, DR. LAZARUS WOKE ALEX FROM HIS SLEEP TO BE RID OF HIM FOR A WHILE...



WHEN HIS ASSISTANT FINALLY LEFT, DR. LAZARUS RETURNED TO HIS SOLUTION, WHICH HE HAD HIDDEN FROM THE PRYING EYES OF HIS ASSISTANT, AND COMPLETELY SATURATED HIS SCRAWNY LITTLE BODY WITH THE LIQUID...



THE EFFECT WAS ALMOST IMMEDIATE. DR. LAZARUS FELT HIMSELF GROWING BIGGER AND BIGGER... WHAT THE DOCTOR OVERLOOKED, HOWEVER, WAS THAT THE SHIFTLESS ALEX WOULD RETURN ON A PRETENSE...



THE THING

HIS BREATH AND STRENGTH SUDDENLY LEAVING HIM AT THE SIGHT OF THE GROTESQUE FORM WITHIN THE LABORATORY, YOUNG ALEX SLAMMED THE OAK DOOR AND STUMBLED OFF INTO THE SNOW FOR HELP...



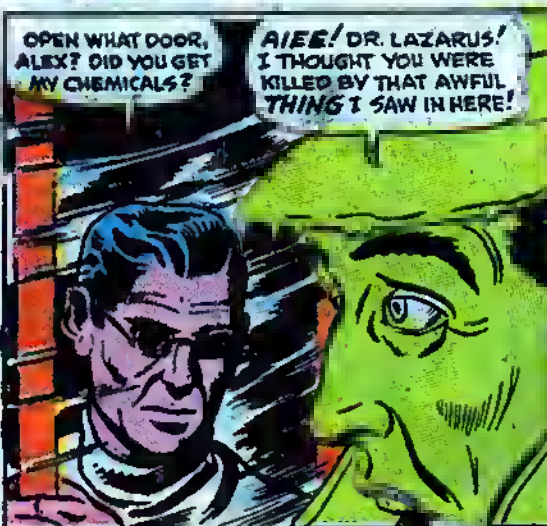
HE BROUGHT THE POLICE WITH HIM WHEN HE RETURNED.. BUT FROM THE START THEY DOUBTED THE CREDIBILITY OF ALEX'S EXCITED EXPLANATION OF A GIANT FORM...AND WHEN...



GET SET FOR ANYTHING WHEN I OPEN THIS DOOR... IT MAY EVEN ATTACK US!

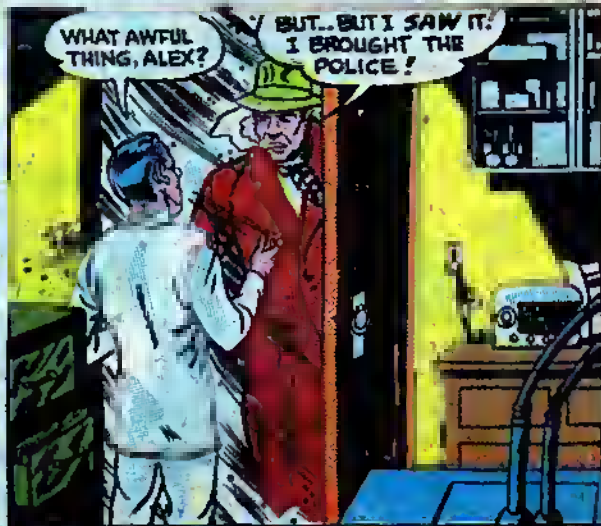
OPEN WHAT DOOR, ALEX? DID YOU GET MY CHEMICALS?

AIEE! DR. LAZARUS! I THOUGHT YOU WERE KILLED BY THAT AWFUL THING I SAW IN HERE!



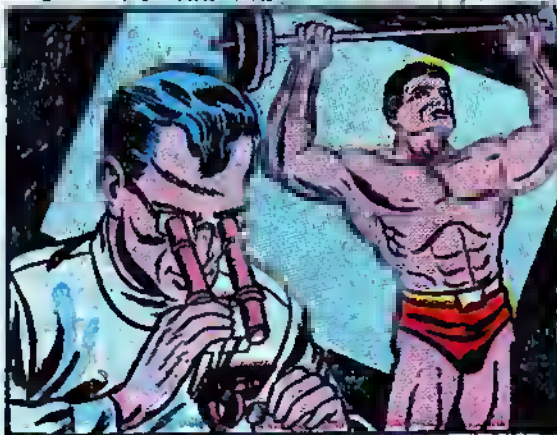
WHAT AWFUL THING, ALEX?

BUT... BUT I SAW IT! I BROUGHT THE POLICE!



THE POLICE LEFT DR. LAZARUS AND ALEX TO ARGUE OVER WHAT ALEX SAW OR DIDN'T SEE.. THERE WERE INSULTS AND JEERS... BUT SOON THE MATTER BECAME TOO ABSURD TO MERIT DISCUSSION AND WAS FORGOTTEN...

FORGOTTEN, THAT IS, UNTIL ALEX REGAINED HIS EGOTISTICAL CONFIDENCE AND ONCE AGAIN BEGAN TO THROW HIS WEIGHT AROUND THE LAB IN THE SAME OLD WAY...



I WON'T HURT YA, DOC.. IT'S A NEW JIU-JITSU TRICK I INVENTED, THAT'S ALL!

TAKE YOUR FILTHY HANDS OFF ME! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR ROUGH PRANKS!



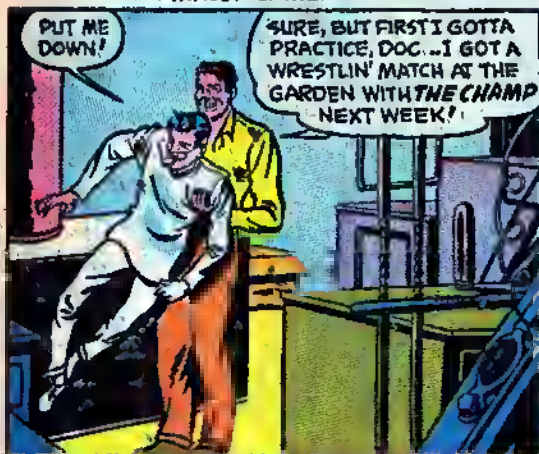
THE THING

WORDS DON'T STOP A MAN WHEN HE'S STRONGER THAN YOU ARE, AND DR. LAZARUS SOON FOUND IT WAS USELESS TO PROTEST ALEX'S PUSHING AROUND.

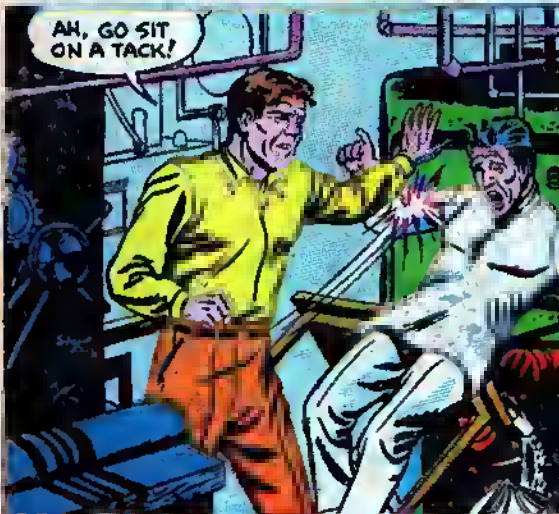
THROUGH THE REST OF THAT WINTER, HEMMED IN THE DAMP LABORATORY BY IMPORTANT RESEARCH AND BY THE BLIZZARDS THAT FROZE THE CITY, DR. LAZARUS WAS THE BUTT OF ALL OF ALEX'S PSYCHOPATHIC HUMOR...



...AND THEN THE ICE TURNED TO SLUSH AND FINALLY WAS NO MORE, AND GRASS BEGAN TO GROW... IT WAS SPRING... AND, IN THE SPRING, DR. LAZARUS'S CHANCE FINALLY CAME...



A WEEK LATER, ALEX HAD LEFT THE LAB FOR THE WRESTLING EVENT... AND DR. LAZARUS PREPARED FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL VENGEANCE AGAINST THE BULLY...



THE THING

BUT IN HIS HASTE TO BE AT THE WRESTLING MATCH IN TIME FOR ALEX, DR. LAZARUS DYERLOOKED A HARMLESS WHITE RAT WHO ESCAPED FROM HIS CAGE...

DRAT IT! NO TIME NOW...
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT RAT
WHEN I COME BACK!

THERE! THIS BOTTLE
SHOULD BE MORE
THAN SUFFICIENT
FOR MY PURPOSES...
BUT I MUST HURRY
OR I'LL BE LATE!

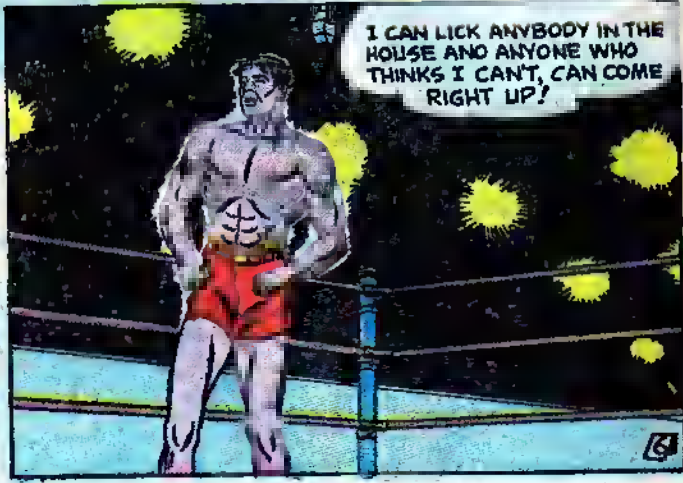
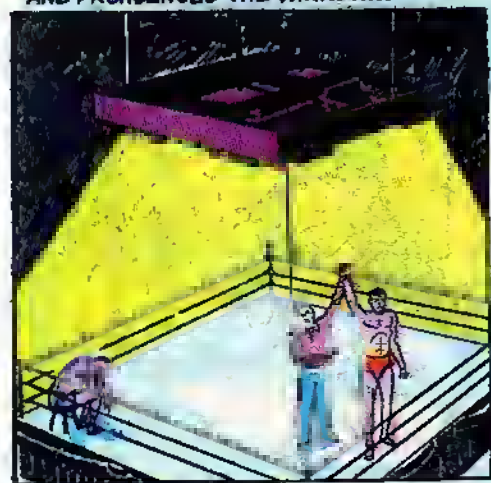
DR. LAZARUS HURRIEDLY LOCKED THE LABORATORY DOOR, FOR TIME WAS PRECIOUS NOW, AND SPED TO THE GARDEN... BARELY SECURING ENTRANCE TO THE ARENA BEFORE ALEX'S MATCH STARTED...

A SINISTER, WRY SMILE CROSSED THE FRAIL DR. LAZARUS' FACE AS HE WATCHED THE BOUT... KNOWING ALL ALONG THAT ALEX WOULD WIN, FAIR DR FOUL... THE DOCTOR FINGERED HIS PRECIOUS BOTTLE... SOON NOW, SOON...



IT WAS OVER ALMOST BEFORE IT STARTED... ALEX PINNED THE CHAMP'S SHOULDERS AND PRONOUNCED THE WINNER...

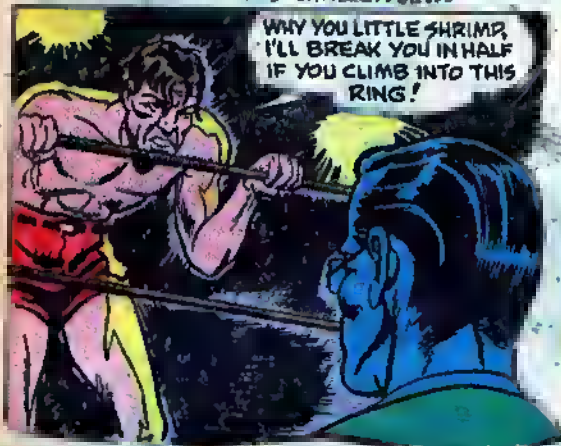
HE STRUTTED ABOUT THE RING, AS IS A WRESTLER'S FASHION AND RECEIVED THE BOOS... THE CHEERS AND JEERS THE WRESTLING CROWD AWARDS TO A WINNER... THEN HE SPOKE...



I CAN LICK ANYBODY IN THE
HOUSE AND ANYONE WHO
THINKS I CAN'T, CAN COME
RIGHT UP!

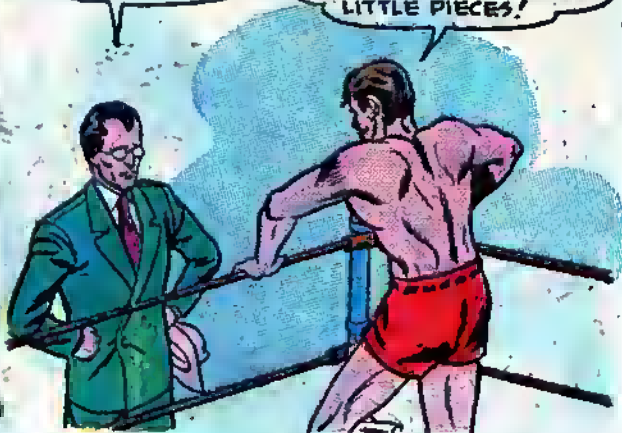
THE THING

DR. LAZARUS MADE HIS INFAMOUS MOVE... A MEAK, PUNY LITTLE MAN WHO STEPPED UP FROM THE SPECTATORS AND CALMLY ANNOUNCED HE WOULD ACCEPT THE CHAMPION'S CHALLENGE...



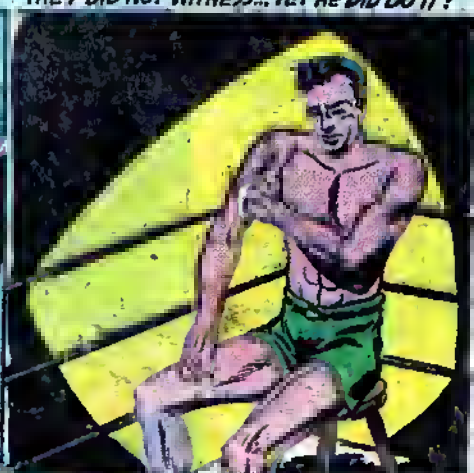
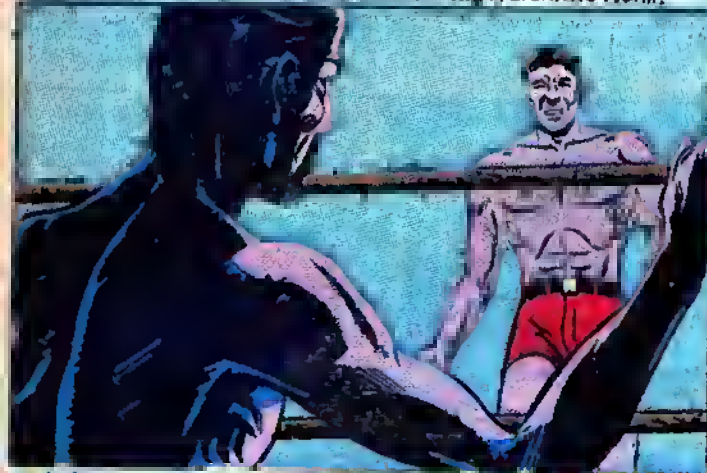
NEVERTHELESS, I SHALL ALEX... JUST AS SOON AS I CHANGE MY CLOTHING...

THEN COME TO YOUR OWN FUNERAL, DOC. I'VE BEEN ITCHIN' FOR MONTHS TO BUST YA INTO A THOUSAND LITTLE PIECES!



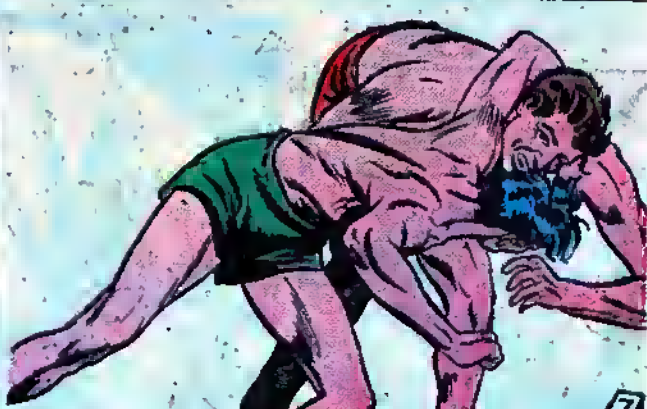
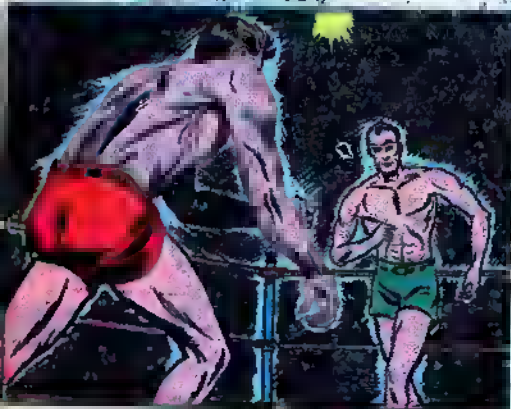
THE CROWD WAITED WHEN THEY HEARD THE NEW CHAMPION HAD ACCEPTED A CHALLENGE FROM THE MAN IN THE AUDIENCE... THEY SAW IT HAPPEN... THEY SAW THE SMALL, SKINNY MAN CLIMB INTO THE RING... YET, THIS, THEY LATER CLAIMED WAS A GIGANTIC HOAX!

JUST BEFORE THE OPENING GONG, DR. LAZARUS SATURATED HIMSELF WITH HIS STRANGE SOLUTION... BUT, THIS, THE PUBLIC LATER CLAIMED THEY DID NOT WITNESS... YET HE DID DO IT!



THE WARNING BUZZER ECHOED THROUGHOUT THE GARDEN... THE BELL CLANGED... AND BOTH MEN CAME OUT OF THEIR CORNERS... SEARCHING FOR THE FIRST HOLD...

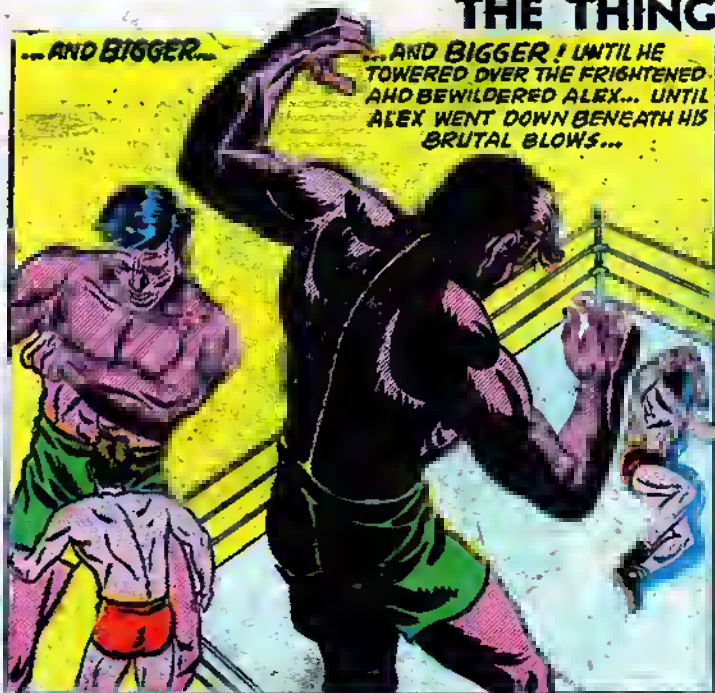
AND HERE THE INCREDIBLE... THE CONTROVERSIAL, EVENT BEGAN TO OCCUR... FOR WHILE BOTH MEN TUSSELED... DR. LAZARUS GREW BIGGER...



THE THING

...AND BIGGER...

...AND BIGGER! UNTIL HE TOWERED OVER THE FRIGHTENED AND BEWILDERED ALEX... UNTIL ALEX WENT DOWN BENEATH HIS BRUTAL BLOWS...



THE CROWD SAW IT HAPPEN... THEY SAW THE GROWING MAN. THEY SAW HIM SHRINK BACK TO SIZE, TOO... AND, SPELL-BOUND, THEY SAW THE LITTLE MAN LEAVE THE ARENA... THEN THEY SEEMED TO COME TO THEIR SENSES AND CRIED 'FAKE!'... IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE!



TO THIS VERY DAY, THE EVENT IS STILL REGARDED AS A HOAX... YOU SEE, THE SPORTING WORLD CONTENDS IT WOULD HEAR MORE ABOUT THIS STRANGE POWERFUL, LITTLE MAN IF THE INCIDENT WERE TRUE... BUT LET US GO BACK TO THE STORY AS IT DID HAPPEN AND EXPLAIN...

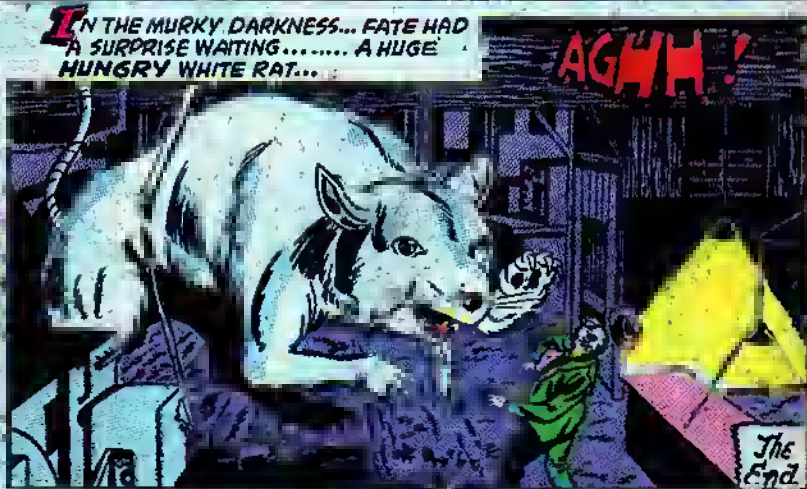
DR. LAZARUS LEFT THE GARDEN, FEELING GREATLY EXHILARATED AT HIS ACCOMPLISHMENT... FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE HAD FELT THE POWER OF STRENGTH, AND HE LIKED IT!



I WILL KEEP SATURATING MY BODY WITH MY NEW SOLUTION UNTIL I BECOME THE STRONGEST MAN IN THE WORLD...

DR. LAZARUS SLIPPED BACK INTO HIS DARKENED SUKHEH LABORATORY AND WENT TO WHERE HE HAD LEFT THE REMAINDER OF HIS SOLUTION... BUT...

IN THE MURKY DARKNESS... FATE HAD A SURPRISE WAITING... A HUGE HUNGRY WHITE RAT...



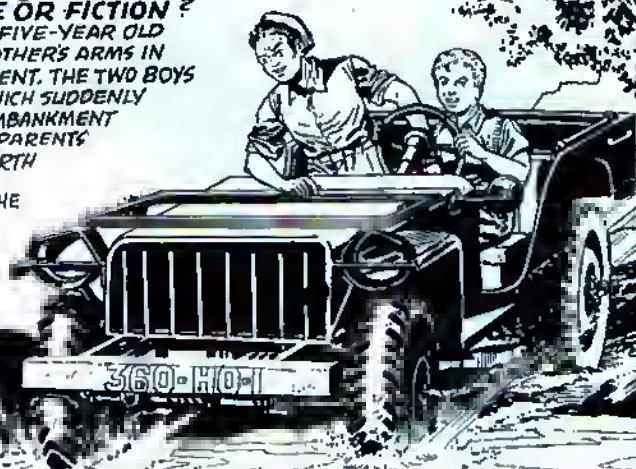
The End



IMPOSSIBLE?

COINCIDENCE OR FICTION?

THREE YEARS AGO TWO FIVE-YEAR OLD BOYS DIED IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS IN MISSISSIPPI RIVER ACCIDENT. THE TWO BOYS WERE SITTING IN A JEEP WHICH SUDDENLY RAN TO ROLL DOWN AN EMBANKMENT INTO THE RIVER... THE PARENTS OF BOTH CHILDREN GAVE BIRTH SEPARATELY TO TWO GIRLS ON THE SAME DAY THAT THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED 30 YEARS LATER....



AMAZING OR FICTION?

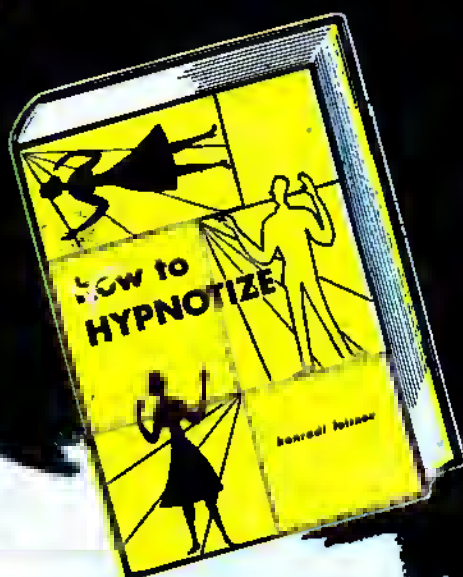
ONE DAY IN COMMACHE, OKLA. RECENTLY, THERE WAS AN AUTO ACCIDENT... ONE OF THE CASUALTIES WAS IN A SERIOUS CONDITION... BEING PREPARED FOR AN AMPUTATION... WHEN SUDDENLY A STATE SURGEON RUSHED IN WITH A SIX-INCH PIECE OF BONE FRAGMENT WHICH HE FOUND 50 MILES AWAY. IT WAS IN TIME TO SAVE THE SURVIVOR'S LEG!

EMERGENCY



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